

In this passage we learn that the evil men of the world tried their hardest to keep Jesus in the tomb after his death, but Jesus rose again as he had promised (16:21). May God help us to accept this historical fact, that Jesus rose again from the dead. Thus, he conquered the power of death.

First, Jesus was buried (27:57-66). Jesus' relatives could claim the body of Jesus for burial on the basis of Jewish law. But they were all Galileans and none of them possessed a tomb in Jerusalem. So they were helpless to deal with the body of Jesus. But God did not ignore these helpless people. God himself provided a new tomb for Jesus and for them.

Look at verse 57. "As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus." There was a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was a secret disciple of Jesus. He was a member of [the Jewish](#) ruling Council (Lk 23:50). According to St. Luke, he was a man of courage who had objected to the secret decision of the Council to put Jesus to death (Lk 23:51).

As we know well, the world of politics is the world of power struggle, compromise and conspiracy. So a politician can hardly be a spiritual man or a man of truth. But there was a man named Joseph who loved Jesus from his heart. He had himself decided to become a disciple of Jesus. Joseph went to Pilate to ask for Jesus' body. Of course he knew that he might offend Pilate, who had sentenced Jesus to death. He knew that he would ruin his political [career](#). He knew that he would become an object of scorn and ridicule among his peers. But it did not matter. He went to Pilate to ask for Jesus' body. He was happy to dedicate to Jesus a tomb which he had carefully prepared for his own burial. In this way, Joseph expressed his love for Jesus. In this way, Joseph proved to be Jesus' disciple. To stand on the side of Jesus who was crucified as a criminal was like standing against the whole world. But Joseph chose to do so. It is indeed amazing that there was a man like him. It was not Joseph, but the providence of God.

What happened when Joseph asked Pilate for Jesus' body? Pilate ordered that it be given to him. Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance of the tomb and went away. This tells us that God provided for Jesus' burial through Joseph. This also tells us the fact that Jesus was buried in the new tomb of Joseph the Arimathean.

The fact that Jesus was buried is important, for the burial of Jesus is prerequisite to the [resurrection of Jesus](#). The burial of Jesus also has spiritual meaning. Jesus is the Son of God. So he cannot be crucified or buried like a mortal man. But he was crucified and buried. Thus, he was separated from God. The burial of Jesus was the most severe punishment to Jesus because his love-relationship with God was broken during the time of his burial. But he was buried under the power of death on our behalf for three days.

Look at verse 61. "Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb." These women were beloved ones of Jesus. They

were the ones who saw God and experienced God's love through Jesus. They were the ones who had served Jesus and his company, even though they had no money in their hands (Lk 8:3). There are many lonely people in the world who pass away without loved ones. But Jesus had many loved ones around him when he was crucified and when he was buried.

What did the chief priests and Pharisees do while the burial of Jesus proceeded? The next day, the one after Preparation Day, they went to Pilate. Now Jesus was crucified and buried. The Jewish authorities had eliminated Jesus totally. And the door of the rock tomb was closed by a huge stone. But they were overwhelmed by restlessness due to Satan's torment (63,64). They demanded that Pilate take special steps to guard the tomb, to prevent the possibility of the disciples' stealing the body and saying that Jesus had risen from the dead. They envisioned that Jesus would rise again as he had said, and they were greatly afraid of his resurrection. Pilate agreed with them and sent them to make the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting a guard. Now it seemed that even if Jesus rose again, he would be unable to get out of the tomb.

Second, the Risen Jesus appears to the two women (1-4). Look at verse 1. "After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb." Mary Magdalene was a woman who had been possessed by seven demons. But she was healed by Jesus (Mk 16:9; Lk 8:2). At the time of the Passion Week, she had followed Jesus from Galilee all the way to Jerusalem to care for his needs (Mt 27:55). She beheld Jesus from beneath the cross, and cried (Mk 15:40). After his burial, she located the tomb and went back to it early in the morning with spices (Mk 16:1). Her name is mentioned more often than most. How could she do these things? It was because she remembered Jesus' grace of healing her from demon-possession. She could never forget the wonderful grace of Jesus. She could not forget the grace of Jesus, that Jesus cared for her when she was like a broken reed. She really couldn't understand why Jesus who was so good, had to be crucified at the hands of evil men. All she could do for him now was to anoint his dead body with spices. So she and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. She was a gracious woman. But she did not know spiritual realities. She also did not know the meaning of Jesus' death and resurrection. She did not have the living hope of the kingdom of God. Jesus' friendship had been everything to her.

What on earth could possibly comfort these two sorrowful women, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary? Great comfort and joy came from heaven. Look at verse 2. "There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it." This verse demonstrates the almighty power of God. Acts 2:23,24 says, "This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him." The power of death could not keep the Son of God in the grave. God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. The resurrection of Jesus is for all of us who believe in him. Those who believe in his resurrection can live with the Risen Jesus forever. Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, cried many

tears over the death of their brother Lazarus. But they didn't have to cry over poor Lazarus. Jesus said to them in John 11:25, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies."

Look at verse 3. "His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow." In this verse, "he" is the angel of the Lord. At the same time, this description fits the Risen Jesus. The evil men of the world crucified him, and he was buried in a tomb. So he should have looked like a decaying corpse. But he did not. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. This is the original appearance of the Son of God. On the transfiguration mountain, "His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus" (Mk 9:3,4). This glorious Son of God came down to this world and healed the sick and preached the good news of the kingdom of God. Finally, he was crucified for the sin of the world. But according to God's promises he was raised from the dead on the third day and appeared to Mary Magdalene in white clothes. Now Mary had no reason to cry over the death of Jesus. She did not need to anoint Jesus' body. Now all she had to do was expect to be with the Risen Jesus forever in white clothes, like the Risen Jesus. At the moment of the appearance of the Risen Jesus, the guards shook and became like dead men (4).

Third, the Risen Jesus urged the women to believe in his resurrection (5-8). What did the angel say to the women? Look at verses 5,6. "The angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.'" The appearance of the Risen Jesus was so staggering that the women did not know what to do. It was too good to be true. It was too hard to believe because, in history, such a thing had never happened. The angel reminded them of the promises of Jesus so that they might believe in his resurrection based on his words of promise.

Like the two women, we only want to anoint Jesus' body to express our love for him. At the same time, we hesitate to believe in his resurrection, because it seems to be unnecessary at present. But when we do not believe in the resurrection of Christ, we cannot get out of the power of sin; we cannot overcome our sorrow over the death of ourselves and our loved ones. When we do not believe in the resurrection of Jesus, we cannot see spiritual realities; for spiritual reality develops beyond the cross. When we do not believe in the resurrection of Jesus, we cannot see the kingdom of God, for it is through his death and resurrection that God gave us a living hope of the eternal kingdom of God. When we don't believe in the resurrection of Jesus, we believe nothing, for Christian faith is based on Jesus' death and resurrection. On the other hand, when we hold onto his promises, we can believe in his resurrection.

What did the angel say to the women next? Look at verse 7. "Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you." The angel urged them to go and deliver the news. Here we learn that the first thing we must share with others is the good news

of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We share with others many things about Jesus. But we frequently forget to share the good news of the resurrection of Jesus. Then, those who do not hear the real good news, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, get bored and cannot but stop studying the Bible.

What did the Risen Jesus say to them? Look at verse 7 again. "Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you." The Risen Jesus wanted to see his disciples face to face. As he promised, Jesus would go ahead of them into Galilee. There the disciples would see him face to face. The disciples who saw the Risen Jesus face to face received the peace of God and at the same time they became changed men. As the disciples saw him face to face, we must see the Risen Jesus face to face by faith. Otherwise, we cannot be spiritual men and women; we cannot be changed persons unless we see the Risen Jesus face to face by faith. We wonder why Paul was so powerful. It is because he met the Risen Jesus on the road to Damascus.

How did the women respond? Look at verse 8. "So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples." At the appearance of the Risen Jesus, the women were afraid; at the same time, they were filled with the strength of God in their souls, and next, with unutterable joy. When they had come to the tomb in the early morning, they walked as if they were going to a funeral chapel. But after meeting the Risen Jesus, they ran to tell his disciples like 100-meter track runners.

Fourth, the Risen Jesus urged them to be his resurrection witnesses (9-15). At the news of Jesus' resurrection the women were stunned and surprised. At that moment, Jesus appears to them and says in verses 9,10, "Greetings. Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me." In these verses we learn that the resurrection of Jesus is the good news of great joy which we must tell others as of first importance.

In verses 11-15 Matthew, the former tax collector, informs us of something of the helplessness of the religious leaders, who represent the power of darkness. When the chief priests heard from the guards everything that had happened, they became utterly helpless. They were like darkness before intense light. They bribed the guards with hush money. It was effective to some extent. But they failed to stop the truth. They could not keep Jesus in the tomb. Jesus had risen from the dead.

Fifth, the great commission (16-20). At that time, when Jesus rose again from the dead, the eleven disciples were in a state of helplessness. They had expected Jesus to establish an earthly messianic kingdom so that they might display their own honor and glory and exercise authority over all nations. But Jesus was crucified and buried. They were paralyzed by the fear that the Jewish KGB would search them out. They had no savings accounts. They needed a way to escape. But the Risen Jesus did not think they were helpless. To the Risen Jesus they were the true leaders of the whole world in fulfilling God's will for world salvation. To the Risen Jesus, they were the true leaders for the future church of Jesus Christ.

How could they be the leaders of the whole world? It was impossible. But with the Risen Jesus, nothing is impossible. Why is it so?

In the first place, because the Risen Jesus gives them authority to rule the world spiritually (18). Look at verse 18. "Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.'" Jesus was crucified, but God raised him on the third day. Philippians 2:8-11 says, "And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death--even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name... [Christ the Lord]" (Php 2:8-11). Now the Risen Jesus is the Ruler and Judge of the living and the dead. The Risen Jesus promised the eleven disciples to give them his authority. Authority means power. The eleven disciples were helpless. But they would receive authority in proportion to their faith in the Risen Jesus. We must believe in the resurrection of Jesus so that we may receive his authority to do his work.

In the second place, the Risen Jesus gave them a commission (19,20a). Look at verse 19. "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...." Christians' mission is to make disciples of all nations. Therefore, we Christians first should be disciples of Jesus, who learn of Jesus in all areas of life. Next, we Christians should baptize others. Here, baptism does not mean a ceremonial or ritualistic procedure; it rather is a declaration of faith that I am a child of God, before God and to the world. Therefore, we Christians must help each person make a confession of faith that he or she is a child of God, before God and to the world.

Jesus urges them to teach people to obey his word. Look at verse 20a. "...and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." We Christians must teach people how to obey the words of Jesus. Here we learn what the Risen Jesus' heart's desire is. He wants all peoples of all nations to obey the word of God, which gives them eternal life.

In the third place, the Risen Jesus promised that he would be with them always. Look at verse 20b. "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." It is obvious that when they heard the great commission, their hearts must have failed them. These humble eleven Galileans had never thought of world conquest. But now they were commissioned to go to all the nations and deliver the message of Jesus' death and resurrection. But they were not going by themselves. The Risen Jesus would be with them wherever they went. When God was with Joseph, wherever he went or whatever he said, he was successful and fruitful. Therefore, faith that God is with me is very important. Paul said in Romans 8:31, "If God is for us, who can be against us?"

As we know, we need so many things to live in the world. So most people work hard to get them all. But there will be a time when each person needs only two things. First is eternal life. Eternal life seems not necessary for our daily life. This is the reason so many foolish people disregard eternal life. But those who have eternal life can pass through the pearly gate to the kingdom of God. Second is the

inheritance of the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is our everlasting home of peace and joy.